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UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT IN GERMANY

• W. M.

From "Der Kampf," Prague, Czechoslovakia

Our announcement of an article or articles on "Can Hitler Win the Coming War?" was answered with a number of letters asking for an immediate article on the illegal movement in Nazi Germany. We reprint below a carefully thought out statement by a more or less anonymous writer who, while presenting the typical outlook of the Social-Democrat, writes as a chastened Social-Democrat, first interested in the reality of the situation. The benevolent smiles that W. M. casts on the "international popular front" is good Otto-Bauerism of vintage 1936-1937. Yet in general the writer's observations are keen and probably coincide with fact. Comment in the next issue.

1. The Seizure of Power and Illusions of Legality

In his 18th Brumaire Napoleon tells how the adventurer Louis Napoleon and his December society overthrew the second French republic. Silone and other historians of Italian fascism record the similar experience of Italian liberalism. Mussolini's first cabinet was received as a sort of intermezzo, a parliamentary episode, a thunder-storm that one had to let pass by. The history of the fall of the German democracy is yet to be written. Its memories are still fresh with us. It was the last event of its kind. Will its lesson help to save the third French republic, Spain and the other democracies?

No other democratic factor was so unprepared to cope with victorious National Socialism than the German labor movement. The trade-unions, the Social-Democratic and Communist parties, the splinter groups, all were equally unready for the fascist victory and its epochal consequences. German, Austrian and Italian socialists find it difficult to form a concrete conception of what really happened. The army of German fascism marched forward in open view. Yet even after January 1933, when the Nazis were already installed in the positions of government, the German democracy, and especially the German labor movement, still doubted the solidity, the realness, the totalitarian character of this conquest of power.

Both on the left and on the right, the German labor movement continued to cleave to the notion that democracy had not stopped. It clung to this belief even after the coalition "National Government" was formed. Hugenberg was said to be the real victor. His four key ministries, the connection of the Nationalists with the Reichswehr, were said to bar the way to fascism, though the power of the latter already began to spread. We know the self-delusions of the Social-Democracy at that time. It put its hopes in the Reichstag elections of March 6, 1933. Its faith in the continuity of the law remained whole, unshaken, though it witnessed the energetic purge of the highest executive positions of all republican officials, the Nazi occupation of the

police presidencies, the issuing to the police of orders to shoot, the establishment of the special "Hilfs" police, the suppression of the press, and, after the Reichstag fire, the institution of open terror.

After the 30th of May, Wels left the Bureau of the Socialist-Labor International. On the 1st of April the executive of the Party justified this step with the explanation that the "resolutions of the Bureau of the Socialist-Labor International on the question of political and organizational measures were reached without the collaboration of the German Social-Democracy. Therefore the German Social-Democracy could take no responsibility for such resolutions." On the 27th of April, a national conference of the Party chose a new executive committee and resolved to continue working within the framework of existing legal possibilities. In May of that year the Socialist Youth of Berlin was expelled from the Party because it attempted to "play the part of illegal young fools" instead of submitting to the "legal" course decided on by the Party.

Even in June, with the trade-union houses occupied and the heads of the unions and thousands of Party functionaries in prison, the Loebe group tried to separate themselves from the emigrated members of the Party executive and claimed that the real administration remained in Germany. On the 19th of June, Loebe called a Reichs conference of the Party to choose a new executive committee composed of Westfal, Stelling, Rinner and Kuenstler. The conference rejected as irresponsible the statements of the emigrated members of the former executive. On the 22nd of June the Party was officially dissolved. On the 23rd Loebe, Stelling, Westfal and Kuenstler were arrested.

And as the party so the trade-unions. The ADGB broached negotiations with an imposter group of the NSBO, which first obtained the elimination of Jewish and left secretaries and then the return of the fugitive union millions. At the time when the administration of the ADGB was securing (for 20,000 marks) the opinion of the State counsellor Schmidt that established its legal continuity under the new regime and while it was arranging, on the 1st of May 1933, a demonstration for peace with the new regime and against class strife, there were already waiting the orders according to which, on the 2nd of May, 20,000 functionaries of the old trade-unions were forcibly removed from their offices, the union houses occupied and the heads of the labor organizations arrested.

Neither was the critical left wing of the party, which then and there had begun to prepare for illegality, able to appraise the situation. Already in February, for example, there appeared in a number of *Notizen zur Lage*, the internal organ of the old Miles organization, an article according to which Hitler's conquest of power was only the "rearguard fight of reaction" and which assumed that the "democratic" elements in the coalition, that is, Hugenberg and his German Nationalists, would come to the top in the end. This evaluation met with some opposition, but it was symptomatic of the general disorientation that was common even among the advanced groups of the Party. No understanding of the changed situation could be expected from the Communist Party of Germany. It was then in its most sectarian phase. It had already analyzed the Bruening government as the victory of fascism. And when Hitler came to power, it surpassed itself in self-delusions about its own invincibility.

This faulty evaluation of the scene by the entire top of the Socialist labor movement expressed the disorientation of the most

decisive sections of the movement. Here and there were critical exponents, without any influence in the general current of the movement, who understood the situation immediately. They were, however, too helpless, too isolated and unimportant to succeed in starting wide attempts at adjustment to illegality—even in conjunction with the advanced elements in the labor movement.

The official liquidation of the socialist and labor organizations was followed in a few weeks by the disbanding of the democratic parties. A process that had taken years in Italy was completed in Germany, at least on the surface, in a period of several months. The non-Nazi organizations were not able to withstand the fast uprooting. Indeed, during the first few months there appeared local centers of opposition. Surviving district and branch apparatuses of the Party attempted to continue their activity, each in its own manner. In these few months of the increased activity of the lower organizations—producing manifestoes, program-making, hectographed throwaways, some propaganda, and a blossoming of old and new splinter groups—the illegal work began. Few had a real conception of the new situation. The 93% vote for Hitler at the November plebiscite on the occasion of the exit of the Third Reich from the League of Nations shed a sudden light on things as they really were. This was the first low point, bringing the initial wave of liquidationism. Millions of former adherents of the socialist and labor movement began to understand that democracy had really come to an end, that the movement was shattered, that there was no hope of its early revival. Such is the story in brief of our unexpected defeat and the collapse of our movement. Under these conditions an effective defense against the brutal measures of suppression taken by the Nazi State was out of question.

2. *The First Illegal Attempts at Adaptation*

From then on the movement was at its strongest in the prisons and concentration camps. The following year seemed to have brought, after the first deep-going convulsion, a definite revival of the organizations that had survived the first persecution. German National Socialism was passing through its great adjustment crisis, which culminated in the events of June 30th, 1934. In spite of all the historical and social differences between the two, this period is comparable to the Matteotti crisis of Italian fascism. It was, however, what can be called a terminating crisis. The turbulent forces of the German "Front of the Second Revolution" met with defeat. On the other side, there appeared the illegal resistance of the "coordinated" bourgeois organizations. With the rise of this mixed radical-Nazi and bourgeois opposition, some of the surviving old worker bodies started to act again. Broken connections were reconstituted. The regime, busy with the "fine gentlemen of the reaction" and its own opposition, allowed the workers a sort of respite. During this time there came the first illegal activity by the local organizations, which still failed to realize that the situation had changed for good and still acted under the guidance of the old generation.

All the illusions about the nature of the adjustment crisis of the Nazi regime are contained in the manifesto issued on the evening of the 30th of June by the executive committee of the Social-Democratic Party installed in Prague. It spoke of a revolt against the fascist regime in Germany and announced the dawn of a new day. And this was the exact formula of the illusions that possessed a considerable section of the illegal movement during that period. The quick stabilization of the regime after the 30th of June, the fusion of the president's office with the party leadership after Hindenburg's death and the nationalist

referendum victory in the Saar at the beginning of 1935 stifled the first efforts at illegal resistance.

From that point on till the occupation of the Rhineland, there took place a systematic uprooting of all "organized" attempts to continue the underground activity. This process of suppression is well described by the trials of that time. The shrivelled up remainders of the old labor organizations no longer acted on their own political initiative and no longer disposed of their information or literature, and sought to make contact with the party and trade-union centers established by the emigrés abroad. The chief work of the illegal bodies during this period consisted in the distribution of literature. With the literature printed abroad, came however, the foreign illusions about the freedom of the movement inside the country. Gestapo agents bobbed up among the persons addressed. The time of the mass raids of the first period was past. Yet the most careful connections were found out. 1935, especially, is the year of a systematic suppression of the first attempts at making contact between the groups in the country and those abroad. All organizations were destroyed at that time. First went the Communist central organizations. The German Communist Party took quite insufficient cognizance of the new situation. It made reports abroad of its inviolability. It wrote polemics against the first qualified conceptions of a movement that would be in line with the real situation. It outlawed and excommunicated all those who dared to utter critical opinions about the senseless sacrifice of obedient party members. It made spasmodic attempts to maintain mass activity in accordance with the formula: "Now more than ever!" The less affected remainders of the Social-Democracy sank into passivity. They sought support in bourgeois labor societies, in skat, smoking and sport clubs. They became more and more non-political. They adopted the traditional program, allowing for personal contact, but no political organizational activity. The weak attempts of the frontier organizations, which did little more than make reports, were suppressed as thoroughly as those of the former distributors of literature.

An atmosphere of helpless sectarianism, of struggles over "leadership" in the emigré organizations, of internal strife, permeated the discussion circles of the younger splinter groups, with little Marxist educational work in evidence. The worst sort of capitulation became prevalent. People began to find "theoretic" arguments for moving all activity outside of the country. Some sections of the old socialist labor organizations sought to enter the malcontent "coordinated" bourgeois societies, the Catholic and the Stahlhelm, where they experienced a second liquidation. This development reached its lowest point with the military occupation of the Rhineland. The 99% vote of approval came quite near the truth. Naturally there remained hundreds of thousands of critical, intransigent anti-fascist elements. But they were completely atomized. Resistance seemed meaningless and unthinkable. The sacrifice represented by systematic work of preparation for the creation of a new bond between the masses and the old movement no longer appeared to be justified. Old party workers with years in the labor movement permitted themselves to slip. Their capitulation was made easier by the role of national liberator assumed by the Nazi régime, which claimed to have torn away the "last" chains binding the country. In the March plebiscite, former socialist and communist party workers voted for Hitler from sheer conviction, though, it is understood, there were hundreds of thousands who did this in the spirit of acquiescence of people who cannot help themselves. The prestige of the Nazi rule reached a new high point. (The zenith of Hitler's influence was to come later, when the Third Reich failed to break through the ring formed against it in Europe.)

Conflicts in families that remained true to the socialist movement were on the order of the day. Parents implored their children to give up illegal work. Children denounced their parents. Even the socialists in the prisons and concentration camps started to give up the fight, resorting to the formula: "There is no longer any use."

3. *The Turn*

This low point was followed by a significant change. It is impossible, in this brief account, to describe in detail what actually happened. We cannot as yet speak of a complete turn. But such a turn will undoubtedly come in time. We have not as yet the creation of illegal organizations imagined by the friends of the German socialist labor movement abroad. There is however an increase in the "ties" being reconstituted in the country. A real maturing of illegal organizations that would enable the anti-fascists to keep up with the rate of the terror and suppression carried on by the Nazi authorities is out of question as long as the division in the international movement, and especially in the German movement, continues to exist. We have not the unity of the existing forces of the German movement, either in Germany or abroad. But there is the development of a tendency toward a new movement, which, if favored by the international ensemble of forces, may become the germ of an illegal revolutionary workers' party, and will help to prepare us for a people's revolution.

Here are some of the symptoms of the new situation. There is a molecular process marked by the strengthening of the workers' class instincts and the rebirth of class self-consciousness among the staunchest labor elements. The pressure of the first four years of the Nazi era is gone. The liquidationist tendencies are being overcome. The advanced elements in the class movement begin to think again of overthrowing the Nazi régime. Former organizational ties are being remade. Persecution by the Gestapo continues, but people have lost their dread of it. It is to be observed that in the last few months the Gestapo is again dealing with cases in which great numbers are involved, though the secret police has by now attained a high proficiency in its method of crushing anti-Nazi tendencies. Bourgeois societies, especially youth sport organizations, are being ordered to dissolve. Outstanding members, as well as former members, of these organizations are arrested serially, without any actual proofs of their illegal activity. A higher degree of political awareness and interest and a greater class solidarity are to be noticed in these disguised labor organizations. Under the Kaiser's Reich, the district State's prosecutors would often complain of the increased attendance at funerals of former "politicals." Similarly the burial of an old functionary in the pre-fascist labor movement becomes a quiet local demonstration with a surprisingly great attendance. Foreign visitors report increased activity and less fear on the part of surviving labor organization men. A year ago the same visiting friends could hardly obtain any information about neighborhood activity. Today they find it easy to get news of interest in the general movement of the country. We also find greater independence in the information service of the underground movement. Foreign literature is no longer wanted as a source of information. Underground information is systematically supplied through the organized use of the radio and by the press itself. What the illegal movement expects from abroad is conceptions, a line, but hardly information. And there are signs of the emergence of a new line, of a new program, of a new aim.

Especially striking is the increase of class activity in the economic field. During the first years of the régime there was in evidence a decline of solidarity. This was due to the great

wage differentiation and the extreme moral disintegration of the most exploited workers. The "smearing" of foremen, the absence of the most elementary class solidarity, denunciations were quite common things. Only the old "organization men," the former union men, stood their ground. We can observe today a reverse process. There are good signs of class solidarity. There are divisional agreements in the struggle over wages. By the means of suitable manoeuvres effected through the representation of invaluable workers having the confidence of the rest there is carried on a movement of defence against wage cuts, which results sometimes in higher wages and improved conditions. There have been no wide strikes. But we have had important acts of defence of the kind described in nearly all lines of enterprise. There are many successful instances of passive resistance. The officially curtailed freedom of movement from shop to shop is hardly enforced, especially in the case of higher qualified workers. There is a definite job fluctuation. A person leaving a job can get one the next day without difficulty. All of this is reflected in the Arbeitsfront itself. Its official representatives are obliged to occupy themselves openly with questions of wage rates. Arbeitsfront secretaries publish bulletins in which they describe how they pay attention to the interests of the workers. Lower and middle Arbeitsfront functionaries have a hard time mediating the real program of the régime. The Arbeitsfront and the Hitler Youth come more and more to the fore as the representatives of the promised "socialist" Germany. Ley and Schirach figure more in the official propaganda and publicity. And there are signs of impending greater mass pressure through the obligatory organizations. The constantly quickened influence from below points to the appearance of a situation similar to that in which Italian fascism found itself at the time of the Rossoni crisis, during the "corrective" period of 1928-29, when the strong activation of the fascist trade-unions of Italy obliged Mussolini to disband the latter and dismiss Rossoni. As in the Italy of 1928-29, so now in Germany, the tendency is due to the economic conjuncture. This does not, however, make the process less significant.

The ebb of the conjuncture too is likely to have a great influence on the anti-fascist drive, especially in Germany, with its particular combination of contradictions. There has already begun a skillful and ominous agitation by workers, who, simulating the ideology and the language of the fake Nazi program and using Nazi slogans, demand the actual "application of the Manual of Service." In all enterprises, and outside, we have men, who dare to speak up, though their attitude undoubtedly endangers them. They are for the most part former members of the old labor movement who had remained in the country in spite of the terror and the threat of the concentration camp. These individuals constitute a sort of point of orientation for the rest. In general, there is less fear of persecution, less fear of being discovered. In spite of the continuing mass arrests there is the spread of a general attitude which was well formulated by a certain official in the following words: "We are again one family. The Nazi know us . . . You can trust friends. Only where they carry on systematic spying do they succeed in coming near us. This is much more than trade-unionism under the fascist system . . ."

All of this goes to show the rise of a new class movement, the causes of which are partly permanent, partly transitory. The strongest driving forces making for this reawakening flow undoubtedly from the economic conjuncture. In the autumn of 1936, at the moment when, as setbacks of the international people's front policy, the first series of defeats after Badojuz had set in, the general interest in the international scene moved, without any noticeable shocks, to the question of the 11.80 marks,

on which, according to Herr Ley, one can live well in Germany. The renewed activity acquires a radical tinge because the standard of living is sinking, because the crisis wages remain unchanged, in face of the favorable economic conjuncture. The fact that exploitation grows in the Third Reich supplies, despite wage differentiation, a clear arraignment of the nature of the fascist prison State.

A second decisive—but “political”—factor is the spreading recognition of the catastrophic war perspective of the Nazi régime. In a number of ways the present economic situation of the country, with its difficulties of getting raw material and phantastically grown war production, reminds one of the economy of the last war. The intrigues and adventures of the Third Reich and especially its intervention in Spain stimulate class consciousness. It is true that we have here an element that may make for new illusions and lead to new mistakes. The self-consciousness of the illegal workers of today brings them to recognize themselves as the representatives of a “Fourth Reich,” one that would come after the probable defeat of the Third Reich. This is a worth-while perspective but, in tempo with the immediate expectation of war, it may give rise to a new unrealistic short-sighted outlook. But if the mentioned historical perspective is correct—and it undoubtedly is, being based on a consideration of the contradictions that finally drive the Nazi régime toward a collision with its imperialist rivals—then the illegal workers will find it easy to rectify any short-sighted expectations, as well as reverses and vacillations.

A third factor exerting a favorable influence on the present underground activity in Germany is the formation of united fronts in Europe, especially that in Spain. The ebb and tide of the Spanish events makes a deep impression on the foremost sections of the German workers. The turn of the Communists to the idea of unity and to the popular front has given birth to new hopes and sympathies. The creation of the French and Spanish People's Fronts strengthened these sympathies. We can observe the growth of realistic concepts of unity among former obstinate exponents of division. We can observe a general increase of friendship and greater personal contact among the different anti-fascist groups. All of this is in the way of a beginning. The outbreak of the war may yet drown the new attitude in a wave of chauvinism. On the other hand, it will be lifted by the first defeat of the existing régime. “Practice” combats of the kind successfully waged by the Italians and Japanese in Abyssinia and Manchouria can be imagined also for Germany, but it is evident that such opportunities are more difficult to find for the Nazis. The Spanish adventure is something like that. It can develop tomorrow into a grab for colonies or another South-European adventure. Because its survival depends on the appearance of success, the Third Reich must continue to seek such adventures. Serious defeats in such preliminary clashes in the relatively near future should favor proletarian-revolutionary chances . . .

We see that the power of fascist imperialism in Germany—the rise of which is bound up with the decline of the old labor movement and the depression of the advanced strata of the working class—faces specific difficulties on the foreign scene and at home. This explains why in Germany, as compared with Italy, we have an earlier appearance of a new class movement of great potential significance. All of this, we emphasize, can still move in the reverse. The latter will depend on fascist success, while the contrary will strengthen the chances of a revolutionary Germany . . .

Translated by A. T.

YAGODA—An Obituary

• Victor Serge

From “Révolution Proletarienne,” Paris

Is Stalin liquidating Bolshevism? No, Stalin is not liquidating Bolshevism; Stalin is Bolshevism. Stalin's system, involving a police-spy network that enmeshes the entire life of a country, prisoners that inevitably accuse themselves, henchmen that are finished off by the Supreme Boss after they had done his dirty work and are found inconvenient, all of that is perfected, developed Bolshevism—a radical movement for national progress, which has adopted, to suit its historic needs, the language and certain concepts of socialism, like its own imitators, Italian Fascism and German Nazism. The fact of government ownership puts the Bolshevik method of political control in a position that can be envied, but only approximated, by the mentioned sister dictatorships. Serge is here speaking for the idealized past of Bolshevism, for the period of 1918-1919, when Bolshevism was most influenced by the internationalism of the Western socialist movement.

The vast police coup d'état begun last July by Stalin to liquidate Bolshevism and to consecrate his personal régime, continues to bring new surprises. In time we shall understand that these eighteen months combine the significance of a Thermidor with that of an 18th Brumaire. Yagoda's arrest is the last great sensation. It puts in shadow the finally confirmed arrest of Christian Rakovsky and the reported shooting without trial of General Putna and the brilliant Bolshevik journalist Sosnovsky, who was so appreciated by Lenin that he made him the mouth-piece of the first Pan-Russian Soviet Executive Committee . . . (Nothing definite is known, and will possibly never be known, about the latter two.) An official communiqué, signed “Kalinin,” notified the world of the charge against Genrich Grigorievich Yagoda: forfeiture, crimes committed during the performance of his duties . . . What duties? Yagoda is an old Bolshevik. He harks back to the time before October. He was a Chekist during the Red Terror. In 1928, he sympathized with the right opposition (Boukharine, Rykov), but not for long . . . He was the head of the G.P.U. for many years. He was the organizer of the acts of repression against the technicians, against all oppositions, in all spheres. Thousands of death orders have received his signature. He governed the vastest concentration camps in the world. This brought him a decoration for the construction of the White Sea-Baltic Sea canal with penal labor. He used to guard Stalin, and at public ceremonies was always seen following the leader step by step. The High Commissioner of Public Safety, People's Commissar of the Interior, a member of the Central Committee of the Party, he was the most feared man in the U.S.S.R. As the minister of police for the genius-leader, he bore the heaviest conscience in the country. In that capacity, he presided over the secret hearings (and what stinking kitchens they were!) of the Zinoviev trial and supervised the execution of the Sixteen. On the day after the conclusion of the Zinoviev-Kamenev-Ivan Smirnov trial came the news of his own fall.

There was the need of a scapegoat on which to unload the responsibility for that badly staged judiciary comedy. It was especially necessary to do away with Yagoda because he had become a highly inconvenient witness. That has been done now. We can reproach him for a number of things. He had committed —by command—all crimes imaginable. He could not now

commit a worse, and less pardonable, crime than that of self-defense. For he could only do the latter by accusing himself . . . Yagoda is lost, without the hope of remission.

I can imagine him inside of one of the cells in the interior prison of the Moscow G.P.U., the prison he himself had built. I can imagine him rereading a prison regulation he himself had signed and waiting for an examination, a judgement, an execution, the rites of which he knows by heart and—finally understanding what he has done and what others like him have done to the Russian Revolution! And here I cannot help but think also of Romain Rolland, who met him in Moscow and dedicated to him such a fine article, such a beautiful article . . . The great chief of the concentration camps and of the most silent executioners in all the cellars in the U.S.S.R. won in a trice the heart of the author of Jean-Christophe. One wonders if this should not be the occasion of another article by Rolland on the same subject. It would be nice and fitting if Rolland did something to save Yagoda's life, for enough blood has been spilt. And isn't there a bit too much cynicism in the Boss's open suppression of his former servitors?

I wrote last September that the entire October generation was doomed. Finished. Lost. All caught in a trap. I repeat. Most of the membership of the present Political Bureau and the few survivors of the old Bolshevik sets, Litvinov, Krestinski, Bounov, Antonov, Ovseenko are also doomed, one way or another. Their existence has become incompatible with the régime which has liquidated the old Bolshevik party by prison and the service revolver.

BEHIND KING GEORGE'S CORONATION

From "Socialist Standard," London

A KING is to be crowned.

In the presence of our Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Premiers of the five dominions of "our" mighty Empire, and the assembled monarchs of many lands, and the Lord God of Israel and the Stock Exchange himself.

The Crown, and the Orb, and the Sceptre, and the Sword of State, and the Cap of Maintenance, and the Rod with the Dove, and the Monkey on the Stick, and all the other symbolical insignia and regalia which have come down to us from barbarism, along with ye Ancient Order of Foresters and ye game of skittles, are to be brought from their dungeon in the Tower (where they have rivalled a pawnbroker's window) and taken to the House of God at Westminster, there to be used in the great ceremony.

And there, before a vast concourse of gentlemen who have won the same distinction in the divorce court that their forefathers gained in piratical, slave-hunting, and other plundering forays of the past, and of high-born dames whose "Sir Joshua Reynolds" peach-bloom cheeks are veritable triumphs of the house-decorator's art, and other high-born dames whose ancient lineage goes back to the mighty Pork Kings of Chicago, one George Wettin, a most cosmopolitan British gentleman, will swear great oaths to be faithful to certain hoary superstitions, and to uphold certain important and worthy institutions, and to lay hold of eternal life, and to do it all for the dirtcheap, unset-competition price of a million a year or nearest offer.

And then another gentleman, who makes a point of doing the job in his night-shirt, scabs on and scandalises every tiddler

in the Kingdom by giving the said G. Wettin a dry shampoo with consecrated hair oil, in the full blaze of the public eye, and to the evident perturbation of the Unicorn, who claims affinity with the barbers by virtue of the pole sticking out of his forehead.

What does it all mean: the Crown, and the Orb, and the Sceptre, and the Sword of State, and the Cap of Maintenance, and the rest of the jewelled symbols?

What does it mean: the swelling Anthem, the mumbled prayer, the intoned exhortation, the anointing with oil, the Crowning and Enthronisation?

What does it mean: the barbaric pomp and splendour, the lavish display of wealth, the clank of arms and armour and the jingle of spurs, the foregathering from the ends of the earth of the Empire's rulers?

What does it mean: the flaunting flags, the streets lined with police and military, the hoarse acclamation of pallid millions whose rags flutter a significant reply to the bunting overhead, the bestowing of a meal upon thousands of little children whom hunger makes glad to accept even such a trifle from hands so heavy-laden with wealth that they cannot feel the weight of the charitable grains they scatter?

We are told that these gaudy jewels, this "impressive service," are full of significance. They are, indeed. To the worker who will think it is obvious that the Crown and the Sceptre and the rest are the symbols of ruling power. But who is it that rules, and who it is that are ruled are matters less generally understood.

It is commonly believed that "royal" power is the attribute of the monarch of a constitutional country, but nothing could be farther from the truth. That question our capitalist masters in this country fought out many years ago. They have left the King his name and his robes, his Crown and his palaces, but they have stripped him of every vestige of power. The "Crown" is not the King, in any capacity, but the capitalist State. The King's Speech to Parliament is written by his Ministers, even the prerogative of mercy is not the King's, but belongs to the capitalist Cabinet.

Even the swearing to uphold the institutions of capitalism is all bunkum and make-believe. There is to-day, in this country at all events, no institution of capitalism that the capitalists themselves are not fully able to maintain, or that they trust to other hands than their own.

The King, as such, is a nonentity, a dummy, a convenient cloak behind which the capitalist class carry on their operations of robbing the workers of the fruits of their toil. As a private individual, the landlord of vast estates, George Wettin may make himself feared, but no one trembles at his royal word, or quakes at the thunder of his anointed brow. If the great ones of the capitalist world bow and scrape before him it is only because he is the incarnation of capitalism, the symbol of the domination of a class of parasites and thieves, the image of themselves triumphant. They know that while the workers will flock in millions to cheer this straw man of theirs, dragged through the streets like a fifth of November guy, they and their plunder are safe. Hence they set the example of deification, knowing well they will be followed by their sheep.

The aim of the master class is to keep the workers ignorant, for an ignorant subject class, not knowing how to act in their own interests, can be more easily and inexpensively kept in subjection than an educated one. In fostering this ignorance the first thing to be done is to preserve the inertia of the mind—the tendency of the mind to run in an unchanging direction.

The capitalists know, as well as we do, that it is changing environment that causes the alteration in the mental outlook

of the people. Their great endeavor, therefore, is to oppose to that ceaseless evolution in the world, about them, over which they have no control, counter-acting conditions and influences. Hence, they cling, with the tenacity of desperation, to the empty husks and decaying forms of the past.

This can be seen in every dominant interest, since every interest, when it has become dominant, becomes conservative and reactionary. It explains why the Catholic Church clings so frantically to its out-of-date forms, why the Anglican and other Churches set their faces so relentlessly against innovation, and why capitalist countries would rather convert their monarchies to their own ends than abolish them.

A king, in the popular mind, rules by divine sanction and in accordance with grey and hoary custom—as the Archbishop will remind the world at the great shampooing in the following words: “Be thou anointed with holy oil, as kings, priests, and prophets were anointed. And as Solomon was appointed king by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet, so be you anointed, blessed and consecrated king over this people whom the Lord thy God has given you to govern.”

The capitalists, on the other hand, have no ancient usage behind them, no special appointment from heaven. Unless they can disguise the fact of their dominance, they are clearly seen to rule by might alone—a perpetual challenge to might. A ruling class which has to confess that it rules because it possesses the means of life, already has one foot in the grave, for it holds a lamp to the line of class cleavage for all men to see.

This is the real use of monarchs in capitalist States. Behind the person of the King the capitalists can hide the fact that it is they in reality who rule. By parading their kings before the workers at every possible opportunity, and with every circumstance of pomp and display that their ingenuity can invent, by investing them with divine right and something of divinity itself, the capitalists awaken and stimulate and nurture that spirit of reverence which is so deadly an enemy to the growth of revolutionary ideas, and so detract attention from themselves.

As it is to the interest of the capitalist class to represent that they, together with the working class, are subservient to a greater power, and to set the example of loyalty to their king, it becomes the imperative duty of Socialists to strip the sham of all its disguising tinsel, and to expose the grim, sordid, unromantic, iron form of tyrant Capital beneath it all. No kingly power exists to-day in Western Europe. Everywhere the owners of the means of production have either bent the monarchy to their will or broken it. Power lies alone with the class of property-owners. They rule who “buzz” us to the check-board at dawn, who tell us we are “sacked” at dusk; they rule who grind our faces on the factory mill-stones, and rob us at the pay-box; they rule who lock us out of the workshops and quarries and mines, in order to convince us by starvation that their view of the value of our labour is correct; they rule who make mockery of their own laws, and bury our poor fellows alive in blazing coal-seams in the bowels of the earth. They rule who own.

Clear your minds, fellow-workers, of any idea that these Prime Ministers of the Dominions of the Empire have gathered together to render homage to the House of Hanover. They come to celebrate the dominion of their class, and to take steps in conference assembled, to ensure the continued crucifixion of Labour. The whole of this inglorious show, indeed, is subordinate to this object. It is not an attempt to solidify and make more stable the monarchy, but to blind the workers to their true position, and make capitalist domination more secure.

It is for this reason that the impudent thieves mock your poverty by flaunting in your faces the wealth they have stolen

from you. They wish you to believe that you are sharers in the stupendous opulence all their efforts could not hide from your vision. The late Lord Salisbury, wise in his generation, once cynically said that what the working class wanted was not education but a circus. They are giving us a circus, in order to make our minds less receptive of education.

Fellow-workers, there is but one meaning attaching to class rule, and that is class plunder. No man wishes to rule over another except to plunder him. Consider whence comes all this wealth and luxury which is to riot before your weary eyes. Is there one jot or tittle of it that you have not made? You, the workers of the world, are the true Atlas. You carry the world upon your shoulders. Your strong arms sow, and reap, and gather the harvest of the field; your stout hearts face the terrors of the mine and battle with the dangers of the deep; your virile brains conquer natural forces, and turn the tyrants of the Cosmic System into agents of wealth production. And what is your portion of it all?

This question is answered by the ranks of armed men who press your serried masses into the gutters, by the gaudy regimental banners whose last glorious inscriptions are “Belfast” and “Tony-pandy,” by the proposal to compel you to pay to ensure that you shall have 6s. a week to keep wife and family on when you are unemployed.

As long as you are ruled starvation will be your lot, for those who rule over you can always plunder you and always will. You are ruled, not by kings, but by those who possess the land, mines, factories, railways, machinery, and other means of production and distribution, and just because they possess those things. Since you are denied access to those things all the doors of life are shut against you except that of the labour market. You must become wage-slaves—must sell your energies to those who own the productive forces. This means that goods are produced for profit, and that profit, that wealth you produce but which is taken away from you, goes to glut the market and to throw you out of work, so that you and your children starve when the warehouses are fullest.

The remedy for all this, is to take these means of production away from their present owners and make them the property of the whole community. Bread will then be produced to feed people, not for profit, and clothes to clothe them, and houses to shelter them. All able-bodied adults will take part in the necessary social labour, and all will partake freely of the wealth produced.

To do this the workers must study Socialism and organize to capture political power, in order that the political machinery may be used to end forever the class domination which political power alone upholds.

June 1911

FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST POINT OF VIEW

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HIS EXCELLENCY TROYANOVSKY

• Yvon

—and the correctly dressed "radical" Broun and the other fat and skinny big brothers of the Soviet and American poor are invited to comment on the following excerpts from "*Ce qu'est devenue la Révolution Russe*" penned by M. Yvon after spending eleven years in the Soviet Union. Yvon is not a writer by trade. The reader will gather that much from his plain speaking and from his rude style. Yvon's eleven years in the land of Stalin's "socialism" were not spent in the Hotels Lux and Metropole. Yvon was not a feted guest in the palaces of the Comintern or Profintern. He spent his eleven Soviet years first as a worker in the slave pens of "socialist" production and then as a factory manager contributing to the functioning of the Soviet slave-master pyramid. Yvon has lived in Leningrad, Moscow, Turkestan, the Volga region, Siberia, etc. He knows both the worker's and the exploiter's Russia. We are reprinting a part of his picture of the Soviet social structure because we think that spreading information of this kind will help to loosen the strangle-hold that the Soviet Master-State has on the militant section of the labor movement of the world. We invite the ambassador, who has recently spoken in praise of the "perfect democracy of the U.S.S.R., to deny Yvon's statements. We invite the "radical" Brouns to laugh away Yvon's conclusions. We invite the "Marxist" Trotsky to indicate why and how Yvon does not conform to the rules of his, Trotsky's, historical-revolutionary scheme, according to which, while Stalin and the "bureaucracy" may be "bad" and the Soviet workers are sweated, yet they are sweated by the bureaucracy of a "Proletarian State."

Personal Liberty

WHETHER HE LIVES in a "cooperative" house, directed by a centralized organism or in a "common" house, managed by the bureau of lodgings of his factory, the worker is always under the thumb of the all powerful centralized organism or of the Communist president of the so-called "house committee." Should he for one reason or another displease these powers, he is subject to all manner and means of attention, visits, inspections; he is moved from one lodging to another; his masters discover that his apartment is too large or that it does not suit him. The quest to discredit the tenant, to raise the house committee or corresponding central organism against him, is incessant, reflecting the terrible housing shortage. In the "common" house, the eviction that follows automatically, according to the law, the loss of a job, emphasizes the new form of serfdom and has the effect of chaining the workers to their places of work. In the case of the slightest slip in the expression of one's political opinion, the "new social order" is implacable. The sinners and their families then have no right at all.

The factory has always been a cursed spot for the worker. It has always been for the worker a place where he must toil against his will. The Soviet factory remains that for the Russian worker. The management is the absolute boss both in fact and according to the new law.

What thing that first surprises you is the presence of an armed uniformed guard at the factory gate. This guard, controlled by the police (G.P.U.) challenges workers who forget to show their passes in the language used by armed factory guards everywhere.

The factory pass, which is renewed every month and bears the photo of the worker holding it, must be shown to the armed

guards also on leaving the place of work. And since it is important to fill the workers' minds with a wholesome respect for this bit of discipline, the loss of the factory pass is made punishable with a fine of 3 roubles and more (the card itself must cost a few kopeks.) This loss therefore equals a days work in the case of the badly paid workers. The fine does not save the worker the need of paying, at a special window opening to the outside, the price of a new pass, including a photograph.

To get hired at a factory, the worker, stands in line at several barred windows, where he presents the following documents: an interior passport, a work certificate, his military booklet and two recent photos (up to 1935 he had to show also his food-card certificate.) Then he answers in writing a questionnaire of 60 to 70 questions.

Years ago, after the Revolution, you could circulate everywhere in the country with a trade-union card; the fact that you were a member of a trade-union organization was enough. Little by little numerous identity paper were added. The Tsarist interior passport, which the Revolution took pride in destroying, was reestablished after 1933. To a much greater extent than under Tsarism, every change of domicile by the citizen is rigorously controlled by the State. Entry into industrial and commercial establishments, into administrative edifices (which keep on rising like mushrooms), into stores and many residential buildings, is impossible without special passes. There are barred office windows and stamped papers everywhere.

One of the cages at which the worker must present himself to get a job is that of the *secret bureau of the factory*, the door and safe of which is sealed every evening. At the narrow window of this office the worker must present his military papers. The hermetically closed door and the mysterious air of the occupants of that office helps to emphasize the "sacredness" of the place.

The secret bureau of each factory is subordinated to the ministries of War and Interior (G.P.U.). It elaborates and announces the mobilization plan of the establishment. It puts together all information on the moral as well as the material side of the mobilization. Its correspondence is not sent by ordinary mail, but always sealed, is transmitted through a special service of the G.P.U. When you are told: "*The secret bureau wants you,*" you feel a chill run down your spine, though you know yourself to be the most innocent person in the world.

You must go through the same procedure to leave a job. That is impossible without the consent of the "triangle," that is to say, the factory director, the president of the factory trade-union committee and the secretary of the Communist cell. The shrewd thing in that case is to get one of the two "angles" of the triangle to influence the other two to let you go look for work in a location that seems preferable to you. You can solicit a certificate from the factory medical commission attesting to your need of a change of air or work. But sickness, health and other official means are never sure means without the "pull." In the U.S.S.R. it is very important to have the right connections, pull, especially pull with the Party representatives. Lacking pull, you may get rid of a bad job by committing intentionally a breach of discipline. That will free you from the unwelcome job, but it will also result in having the management put notations on all your papers, so that you cannot get any other work, excepting in a sovkhos or on some distant construction in the wilderness, in the cold districts. In those "free" prisons, you can take your time washing your sin clean. When the punishment has been judged sufficient, you have the right to take back your place—in the factory you wanted to escape.

A motivated dismissal of this kind always bears terrible consequences. Yet it takes mightily little effort to be found deserving

of it. It is enough, for example, to have been ill without the recognition of your illness by the office. You are then declared to be a "deserter from the socialist labor front." You are also considered to be such a deserter if you are late for work a number of times, and catch then all the good things that come with this misdemeanor.

Malingering can be punished with imprisonment, and when the authorities want to "burn" somebody, they often do it under the pretext of "premeditated, systematic and voluntary malingering." This amounts to sabotaging the "socialist" economy and is a very grave matter. Workers who cannot really stand anymore of their job try to save themselves the day after pay, but that means the loss of 10 to 20 days of wages, as the Soviet worker never collects all of his two weeks' pay. His bosses hold back on him a part of his wages that is so much greater than what the most authoritative capitalists have ever thought of keeping. But when you cannot stand the job any longer, the fear of losing 20 days pay would not stop you from escaping, if the need of having a regular passport, regular military booklets and work did not oblige you, in that case, to a quasi-illegal life, with the sovkhozes and distant public works as your only resource. In spite of that, such escapes do occur.

The peasant is no more favored. Changing a kolkhos or leaving one is as hard as changing a job in a factory. Since everything that the peasant possessed had been "collectivized," he would lose his all, or nearly all, if he left. Leaving with nothing, the peasant has no hope of creating for himself a new personal enterprise and faces few chances of finding a place in another kolkhos.

You are really bound to the factory as much as the peasant is to the soil. You can change work or cities of your own accord only at the risk of difficulties that exceed by far those under Tsarism. And neither can the worker oppose himself to the migrations of workers found necessary by the "plan." Isn't that serfdom?

If there is the need of a passport to move around inside of Russia, a passport is quite naturally needed to leave Russia.

Everybody, even a worker, can ask for a passport to go abroad, but this request must be accompanied with a payment of 230 roubles (a month and a half of the average worker's wages). After a month of two of waiting, they return you 200 roubles, 30 roubles less than what you have given them and . . . you are refused a passport.

Indeed, only the fine people charged with official missions, that is, diplomats, athletes, litterateurs obtain foreign passports. For the common mortal, requesting such a passport not only means spending 30 roubles for nothing. It is also a sign that he is discontented. And that is a serious matter.

You can however leave Russia in spite of that, but only if you are "ransomed" from abroad with a sum of \$300 paid in foreign money, which is certainly not accessible to many people.

There remains one means of leaving Russia. Illegal flight. But against such practice, we have the decree of June 6, 1934, dealing with hostages. Here are the provisions of the law:

1. Passing the frontier without a passport is punishable with death or ten years of prison for the civilians, and exclusively with death for the military.

2. The adult members of the family of a military deserter are punished with 5 to 10 years of prison if they knew of the desertion without informing it, and if they did know of it, with 5 years of prison in Siberia.

3. If a military man has not informed of an escape, he is liable to 10 years of prison. If he is a civilian, the non-informer

is subject to the provisions of the law dealing with crime against the State.

Freedom of Thought

All education in Russia is based on the principle that the thought of the individual should be fashioned at will to suit the needs of the government. The masters of the Soviet State, by definition, are the exclusive possessors of the truth. The only truth and the course to be followed in applying are decided by the directing elite. The population must be adapted to this truth. Man is clay to be kneaded in accordance with the masters' desire. On one hand, we have the initiate, and on the other, the general population, docile in the hands of the initiate. Thus from the kindergarten to the university, nobody learns to think for himself. The injunction is not "Think!" but "Think this and only this!" The same themes are repeated in the wall pictures of the nurseries, in the books of the elementary schools, in the courses of higher schools. There is one catechism, the catechism of "Leninism-Stalinism." To get to the highest schools, to arrive at desirable positions, and to hold on to the post already won, it is best to know the catechism well. In university entrance examinations, the most important questions deal with "Leninist-Stalinist" policy. It is good to have a fundamental acquaintance with the orthodoxy of the moment. For every deviation from this theory is heresy, and any person showing himself guilty of heresy, even in private conversation, loses his position.

Provident, "go-getter" parents therefore put their children, at the age of 5, in the "Octobrist Children's" corps. At the age of 8, good children enter the "Pioneers," later the Communist Youth and finally the Party. The Party card is the indispensable talisman for any person who wants to make his way in the world. The Communist Party is therefore the object of a constant rush. The government trade-unions, membership in which is practically obligatory, fulfill one of the lower functions in the régime. Their purpose is merely to educate the workers in the spirit of the dictatorship, to organize them for greater production and to extract from them money in the form of "loans" and "voluntary" unpaid hours of work. Originally the trade-unions were organs of opposition. They constitute now an important lever for the State power. Who better than trade-union functionaries can confuse and keep in line the working population?

A multitude of newspapers circulate in the U.S.S.R., the *Pravda*, the central organ of the Party, has numerous brothers all over the country. Every factory issues its special sheet. But of all these publications—local, district, central, factory, sport, Party, trade-unions, Communist Youth, Red Army—of all the 10,000 publications, not one prints a line that is not in total conformity with the official opinion of the moment. The same tone, the same style, the same political line, the same words. Every day an unsigned leading article reproduces under 10,000 different titles what one must think and say on that day to be "in line."

Professional orators are a mighty host in the U.S.S.R. They study the technique of their trade in special schools. Their function is to spread orally the same "only truth" found in the papers. They are furnished with special periodicals and pamphlets which keep them informed on the last slogans, on the latest manner of presenting the slogans without risking the sin of "deviation."

One is an "artist" or a "writer" in the U.S.S.R. to the degree that one aids the official propaganda or embellishes the last slogan. A writer with different opinions stops being a writer

soon enough, for he cannot be published and cannot even find paper for his use.

The theatre still produces some classic plays and several old operas. It thus acts as a sort of museum of art. But outside of that, the theatre, the screen and the radio produce only what suits the "only truth." They are all under the control of the severest of censorships.

The intensity of the official propaganda is so great that it is not only impossible to hear or see anything but the eternal "only truth"—in the factory, lunchroom, at home, in the street, in the movie house, in the newspapers, in books, in the city or in the countryside. It is impossible to avoid hearing and seeing it. Evening courses on "political thought" pursue you at night, into your home. You always need to prove your power of assimilation as a good wide-awake citizen.

Orators, writers, actors, cinema players, form an army whose job it is to shape the thought of the population. Stalin found the right word when in his wisdom he applied the title of "engineers of the soul" to his Soviet writers . . .

It is not safe to express your own opinion either in speech or in writing. Only the official organizations may hold public meetings. But even the official organizations — the soviets, trade-unions, etc.—cannot meet without the control of the Party. The speakers are designated in advance by a superior rank of the organization. The same organs dictate the decisions to be reached at such meetings. Anybody may take the floor. The only condition is that you speak in agreement with the official decision. You may also ask questions, but you must do so orally or sign your name to the written question.

There is much criticism at meetings. Everybody criticizes violently and constantly. There is no country where you have so much criticism. But this criticism is directed exclusively against persons who are said not to apply diligently enough the line decided on by the top. Not a meeting passes with the discovery of lukewarmness in a neighbor in the accomplishment of his task. To criticize your neighbor means to push yourself to the fore. You criticize in order to take away a good post from another man, to replace him.

These frequent bitter public criticisms call for great pugnacity on the part of people who want to keep the confidence of the top. The best way to deal with criticism in Russia is to anticipate it or to accept it. When you know yourself to be in danger, you accuse yourself in time. You do it publicly and energetically. You try to do it louder than your critics. You recognize all your errors, though they be non-existent, and after the theatrical mea-culpa, you express your decision to correct yourself, applying all your strength to the triumph of the line. That is what is called "self-criticism." Not everybody has the mentality permitting him to play this vile comedy easily. But when you want to keep a good position, moral fastidiousness is not an asset.

It is especially difficult for the population to escape this intellectual constraint, this moral servitude, because the youth, those younger than 30-35, who form 60% of the population and are its most active section, have never known any other régime. Shaped mentally in the total ignorance of anything than what is about them, the youth has nothing to compare its life with. To a great extent, the youth is free from any doubt. Those addicted to this, keep their qualms to themselves, for doubt is heresy and is liable to heavy punishment. The youth is made to believe that everything in their life that is not convenient is a left-over from Tsarism, while everything acceptable is a gift handed down from above by the new régime. There do exist free minds. But they must keep quiet. The G.P.U. never gives them time to find an echo around them.

People do laugh in Russia. Merriment is not entirely gone. The youth, born under the régime, ignorant of anything that is not Stalinism, having more or less faith in the promise of future happiness that all societies in movement inscribe on their palaces, the youth does have its moments of gaiety.

Human beings tend to laugh no matter where they are. Human beings have a physiologic need for laughter. There is laughter in prison cellars, in barracks, in trenches. There is gaiety also in the obligatory Soviet demonstrations.

Political Freedom

Neither factory directors, nor judges, nor the public prosecutors, nor the heads of the armed forces, nor any officials, are elected. They are all named from above and remain absolute masters in their domains. Here is a self-recruited hierarchy.

Neither are the trade-union and Party officials elected. At all steps of the ladder, they are chosen and proposed to the organization assemblies by the higher organs of the trade-unions or the Party.

No one has the right to organize outside of the official bodies, and in the latter there is, however, no hope of expressing one's viewpoint. Any attempt at independent organization is qualified as treason or plotting . . .

Immediately after Kirov's assassination, the plenum of the central committee of the Party decided to establish the secret vote, direct elections and equality of representation (for city and country) for the Soviets. This reform is not what it seems to be when regarded naively. Without the right of presenting other programs and other candidates than those named by the government, we shall continue to have here the usual farce. Indeed the new arrangement will be of advantage to the government. Studying the negative ballots it will be able to find out exactly how many malcontents are found in any régime. This system has been practiced for a number of years in Fascist Italy and in Hitler's Germany. The direct election of delegates to the different Soviet congresses could only become important if the latter played a part in the direction of the country and if they were chosen freely from among the various political tendencies . . .

All deviations of opinion, all opposition (even Communist) are branded as counter-revolutionary and as such are severely suppressed. Whether of the right or the left, whether monarchists, fascists, Communist oppositionists, Socialist — Revolutionaries, syndicalists or anarchists, all who do not agree with Stalin's orders are "counter-revolutionaries."

The common criminal generally suffers a much lighter penalty than the political delinquent. The first gets a public trial. He has the right to defend himself. He can take advantage of amnesties, etc. The dictatorship fears the free mind much more than the thief and murderer, and that is logical.

Yet, the reeducation of criminals, thieves and prostitutes, which was one of the boldest ideas of the Revolution, has so degenerated that it is now only a bluff destined for naive visitors. At the present time, criminals and even petty thieves are shot. And according to the law of the 8th of April, 1935, children of 12 are also punished by death.

The judges and public prosecutors are as usual people of career and are appointed from above. Like the Soviet magistrature, so the Soviet police.

Since the 10th of July, 1934, the G.P.U. has borne the name of "Commissariat of the Interior." This "Commissariat of the Interior" can, in the manner of a simple administrative measure, that is, without any trial, sentence any person to five years of forced labor or exile. This punishment can be renewed indefinitely.

The forces of the G.P.U. are specially chosen. They comprise a mobile guard of 100,000 men, forming the best trained

and best treated military group in the U.S.S.R. Its officers are educated in special schools. A member of the G.P.U. may be permitted to retire, but he is then still attached to the corps and undergoes periodic training and inspection.

The G.P.U. network of informers and spies spreads over all the factories, all establishments and even residential houses. Many persons in the Soviet Union assume the role of informer voluntarily—either from ambition, or as a result of political conviction or from jealousy felt for their neighbor. Anybody who has once supplied information to the G.P.U. leaves his name, address and photo in the bureau, and finds it hard not to continue playing the part of the informer.

Denunciation and provocation have become an integral part of the *mores* and civic virtues of the country, as a result of the prevalent ignoble competition that goes on among citizens of all ranks to get on the good side of the authorities and the Communist Party. Illegal action within such a net is almost a total impossibility. The Soviet citizen must watch carefully his own correspondence, his private conversation, even with those nearest to him. The least imprudence can bring grave consequences. Writing abroad, you must not forget the postal censorship.

Here is a classic case in the land of Soviet socialism:

Peter, a comrade in your shop or office, a neighbor, a friend, a native of your village, or a relative, has uttered in the course of a little gathering of relatives or friends, one evening over the samovar, some rather circumspect reflections on the troubles of the time. Perhaps he expressed some doubt that such misery can bring well-being and liberty to the workers. His opinion was reported. Three days pass, and you don't see Peter in the shop. You never see him again. From his wife, you learn that at 2 o'clock in the morning, some agents of the Interior (G.P.U.) made a search of their home and took along her husband. Where? She will not be told, but she will nevertheless go to bring him some food in the so-called "inner" prison of the G.P.U. The road of repression is so well-known that if anybody disappears you go first to the window of the G.P.U. office rather than to the morgue.

For three weeks, for a month, the poor devil awaits his fate in prison. He undergoes all kinds of examinations and may receive no visitors. It is then that the most insignificant details in his past life take on the most decisive importance. An investigation reveals that he rarely frequented meetings, that he was not a "shock" worker, and attempted to wiggle out of the so-called spontaneous May 1st and November 7th demonstrations. The case is clear. He is a "counter-revolutionary."

His wife will then receive from the G.P.U. the only communication she will ever receive in this affair: a notice to bring, on a certain day, at a certain hour, at the North station, warm clothing for her husband. She will then perhaps be glad to be freed from all this uncertainty and learn that he is alive. She will see him at the station for several minutes, before he leaves for Siberia, and will learn that he will be gone for 3 or 5 years. Some letters, permitted at very long intervals, will help her to remember.

Such is the story of Peter. Peter is not a great hero. He is not an active revolutionary belonging to a political movement. He is an ordinary worker who merely felt the need of saying aloud—not too loud—what he thought. We defy anybody to deny that Peter's is not a typical and general case. There are few people in Russia who have not had one or several Peters in their family, among their friends or acquaintances.

All means of repressions are good for "counter-revolutionaries": deportation, concentration camps, prison, capital punishment.

Deportation is exile to Central Asia, Siberia, the Far East,

where the climate is so harsh that the free population hardly goes there. They are unpeopled regions, with almost no means of communication, far from any frontier. Many Siberian cities owe their origin to the Tsarist political deportations, and Soviet "socialism" continues the work of its predecessor. It peoples the virgin forest and the desert with deportees . . .

The prison is no more agreeable in Russia than elsewhere. The Soviet prisons are, however, much more crowded. We challenge the Soviet masters to give the number of political prisoners held in their prisons.

Capital punishment is executed with a shot in the nape of the neck fired by special expert professional "socialist" executioners.

The *minus* order is the order prohibiting one from staying in a certain locality. It is inflicted on revolutionaries judged to be dangerous, after they have finished their regular punishment.

The *concentration camp* merits special mention because it is a new thing, because its name is deceiving and because the Russian concentration camp sometimes holds hundreds of thousands of convicts. It is no more or less than the old galley-prison, but a galley-prison that takes in indiscriminately thieves, assassins, prostitutes, saboteurs and political prisoners. That is where Peter will live.

The concentration camp is of relatively recent origin. Since, under the Stalinist régime, the number of the imprisoned underwent a steady, formidable increase, it not only became impossible to house them in the prisons on hand, but even to feed them, without bankrupting the State. Therefore, the imaginative G.P.U. invented the commercial galley-enterprise, called concentration camps. Gathered in groups of several tens of thousands in the middle of the swamps that are to be drained and the forests to be cleared, or on the site of the canals that are to be dug, the convicts are housed in Adrian huts under the guard of the G.P.U. troops. They work, and they eat in accordance with their work—600, 400 or 200 grams of bread a day. The task to be accomplished is always increased because those who hope to get a diminution of their sentence become "oudarniks" (shock workers). The hardy fellows get along. The weaker brothers croak—since the least slump in productivity brings a reduced portion of bread, and that in turn brings automatically reduced productivity, and so on.

But if the work is hard, the "customs" are more so. It is not difficult to imagine what happens when our Peters live in forced promiscuity with the prisoners hailing from the underworld. The latter are the only category of convicts that is organized, organized to impose its own law, it is understood. Only the fist and vice count inside of the camp; it is impossible to have it otherwise. To escape this situation, Peter has the alternative of suicide or escape. Both will, however, lead to the same end. For you may escape from places of deportation but not from concentration camps. A man deported to Minoossinsk or Naryn is surrounded by thousands of square kilometers of wilderness or impenetrable forests. Surveillance over him may therefore be reduced to a minimum.

Under Tsarism, we had the terrible secret police called "Okhrana." Under Tsarism there were provocations, deportations, hangings. But we must recognize the Tsarist régime was much less harsh with political (revolutionary) prisoners. Publicity in trials and defense by the accused were permitted. Capital punishment was not employed as widely as now. Deportees were "exploited" to a much smaller extent.

The June issue of the International Review will contain Yvon's description of the structure and activity of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

books

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOCIALISM

By John Strachey, Random House, New York

REVIEWED BY PAUL MATTICK

(Continued from April Issue)

After a sickening attempt to simplify the Marxist concept of surplus value, he takes up the differences in the distribution methods in Russia and the rest of the capitalist world. For him the one is more *evenly* regulated than the other. And that is why the one cannot get rid of commodities, the other has an easy time at that. Furthermore the capitalist system of distribution creates classes, for "what places a particular individual in one or the other class is not the *size*, but the *source* of his income (p. 98)." As if the source is not always productive labor and all activity, which is not such, is not supported by surplus labor of the producers. How is it possible to divorce the size from the source? A great size is a greater slice, a greater appropriation of surplus labor. Under relations of exploitation the "size" becomes also a source for greater exploitation. Strachey needs his trick formulations to justify the differentiation of income in Russia. The whole question of distribution boils down for him to "how much shall this man get—how much the other." Exploitation must be planned in order to be continued. "Communists," in Strachey's opinion, "do not propose either, as an immediate or as an ultimate aim, the provisions of equal incomes to all members of the community, a flat equality of pay would not only be impossible it would also be undesirable (p. 117)." The pay is given according to the quality and quantity of work. Again the planning authority makes the respective evaluations. For instance, a judge who convicts more Trotskyites or more important Trotskyites than another, will be promoted and given more pay. A GPU-agent who tortures more scientifically (quality) more "Hitler agents" in a shorter time (quantity)—in other words, a real Stakhanovist in his field—will have to receive more pay. As in capitalism, those whose work is, from the social point of view, most important and most strenuous receive the lesser income. If quantity and quality of work really were the measurement, the present picture in Russia would have to be reversed, the lowest paid would have to replace those paid highest at present. If a *productive* worker in Russia receives monthly 200 rubles and a *destructive* military officer 20,000 rubles, it is simply idiotic to say that the incomes are based on the quantity and quality of work. The production and reproduction of labor power is in reality, like everything else, also in Russia left to the individual. It is not socially regulated. With this the prices of labor must vary as they do in capitalism. Even in the case of the Stakhanovists the phrase "according to quantity and quality" is without sense. In relation to their output the wages of these workers are lower than those of other workers. Their wages rise slower than their productivity, they are now more, not less, exploited. Marx's concept of quantity of labor involves labor *time*, Strachey's concept of quantity and quality of labor has nothing to do with Marx's idea. On the basis of Strachey's measurement of the "value" of work, socialism is impossible. His measurement implies a system of exploitation, of wage-labor and the market and money economy.

"The actual quantitative degree of inequality between different earned incomes is always small as compared with the inequality between earned and unearned incomes," Strachey consoles himself, "for while an income of fifteen times the minimum level can easily be spent on consumers goods and services, an income of forty thousand times the minimum level cannot so be spent, and must be in a large measure accumulated (p. 105)." Here he uses another trick to show that the Russian inequalities are not as bad as in other countries. In capitalism, accumulation is a private function and necessitates high inequalities in order to be possible. In state-capitalist Russia it is a collective function of the new ruling class and the income of this class are accounted for after accumulation has taken place. Necessarily their consumption fund will be expressed in smaller figures, but the higher income of the private capitalists might mean at the same time a lower consumption fund, when compared with that of the new Russian bourgeoisie. There are exceptionally high private fortunes in the old capitalist countries. But it is yet to be proved that the consumption fund of the non-workers in private-capitalist countries is higher than that of the non-workers in Russia. And this has to be proved on an equal productive level. In *Capital* Marx pointed out that the capitalists at the beginning of capitalism, were quite abstemious, for they needed a relatively large share of their profits for capitalization. It is a long step from this situation to Veblen's Leisure Class. The consumption fund of the new ruling class in Russia will increase with the increase of exploitation, a process we are now witnessing. Accumulation on the basis of inequality means the accumulation of inequality. With the necessity, the rich in Russia too will become richer and the poor poorer.

Naturally the "present interest-bearing government bonds" in Russia don't fit in Strachey's argument about the process of accumulation. However he hopes "that this will prove a temporary and transitional feature of a system of planned production for use (p. 106)." Unfortunately for Strachey this form of "unearned income" is on the increase in Russia. To do away with it, a new expropriation of the expropriators of other people's labor will be necessary. Never does a privileged class give up their privileges without a struggle. Not the abolition but the development of classes characterizes the Russian scene. Stalin claims that classes have already been abolished, and so Strachey explains that the abolition of classes means nothing more than equality of opportunity. Opportunity to get a bigger slice from the "sourceless" consumption fund. "It is true," he admits, "that in a socialist society the children of the higher paid workers enjoy advantages over the children of the lower paid. But such advantages can be almost completely offset by a sufficiently comprehensive system of social services, such as State education, etc. (p. 109)." He does not even see that his statement contradicts itself, for if you offset such inequality there would then be no inequality. But why inequality in the first place? Furthermore on this basis Strachey's socialism could not be fulfilled, for in his system inequality, as we already know, is not "only necessary but desirable." It becomes clear that all Strachey is striving for is a philanthropic capitalism which gives some of the poor a break once in a while.

Inequality there must be for Strachey because "one of the characteristics of contemporary human beings . . . is that they are accustomed to work for an individual reward (p. 115)." On the basis of this argumentation the entire capitalist society will have to be preserved, for people are accustomed to it. It flouts his conception of justice "that the better worker should get no more than the less good worker."

The "years of training" which the better worker went through must be rewarded. But all the time Strachey argues from the level of the bourgeois society which leaves the reproduction of the different labor functions to the individuals. This bourgeois point of view he tries to eternalize. In socialism, however, the reproduction of labor power is a social affair. Training for labor itself is labor. It is not preparation for a higher income, but for some useful social work. Society provides for the training. With this the "justified claim" for a better income because of personal sacrifices disappears. For Strachey, however, better pay is more than the satisfaction of his "sense for justice." It is "one of the incentives which makes a man work for promotion. Many men are allured by the increased power which promotion nearly always brings with it. Associated with power is prestige (p. 137)." Power for what? Over whom? In a classless, non-exploiting society? Strachey does not want such a society. He wants state-capitalism a la Russia. It goes against his grain to think that a worker should be his equal in society. He wants power and prestige, which is also more material wealth. And for this reason he does not even mention the real incentives to work dominant in Russia. The workers there must either work under the conditions provided for them by a mixture of market relations and the ideas of the planning authority, or starve. Possessing nothing but their labor power, their work is really forced labor, as elsewhere in capitalism. Otherwise there would be no reason for the wage system.

It is true, Marx spoke, and not very clearly, of the two phases of socialism: The first, still requiring a general measurement to enable the smooth-going of production and distribution; and a second phase, where in relation to consumption, such a strict measurement can disappear, because the abundance will make it unnecessary. This measurement is the social average labor time. But Strachey's socialism, as the first phase of communism, has nothing to do with this concept. Marx's concept implies the prior destruction of the capital-wage relationship, which is, on the contrary the basis of Strachey's first phase.

WHO IS IT?

From "Tierra y Libertad," Barcelona

There are people who cannot abandon their usual line of conduct. There are people who persist in continuing their typical devious tricks—in spite of the difficulties of the war, in spite of their own declarations that the situation is serious. Apparently they have learned nothing. Contact with the sectors of the front, where traditional positions have been put aside in order to make a united front against the common enemy, has not convinced them that they need to "sacrifice" themselves by suppressing their predilection for manoeuvres and political strategy.

This is the same old politics, with hypocrisy walking hand in hand with slander against other organizations . . . Sermons are useless with persons who take advantage of their posts to play politics in favor of their party and its designs,—who, using clever but the dirtiest of tactics, thus hope to "conquer positions." In the midst of the war, in time of crisis, when our militians are dying for an ideal, these people find it convenient to manoeuvre, to play with the misery of the population, at the cost of anti-fascist unity. Our own experience provides the most categoric accusation against these elements, who sabotage the Revolution from the rear and do their utmost to make way for a bourgeois resurrection . . . We are in the midst of war. We are making a Revolution. They who refuse to understand this and insist on following the path of their old political sectarianism, will receive from the people the lesson they deserve. We are getting fed up with political manoeuvres!

STATE CAPITALISM AND TROTSKY

J. Ayres
• E. L. Roof

Inasmuch as the "Revolution Betrayed," touched on by E. L. Roof in the February issue of the International Review is the best and latest exposition of the Communist "opponentist" stand and since a treatment of Trotsky's ideas is essential in a thorough discussion of the problem of Soviet Russia, we have acceded to Mr. Ayres' suggestion to include the criticism of Trotsky's book in his series of articles on the nature and direction of the Russian Revolution."

THE NAZIS, Fascists, Soviet Communists describe their surface—political—modifications of the existing system as the total or partial abolition of capitalism. They are enabled to play with the terms "socialist" and "socialism" because for most people the nature of capitalism remains shrouded in darkness. This blindness is especially marked in backward countries undergoing the process of capitalist transformation through the agency of governments manned by politicians who half in ignorant earnestness and half in dishonest play-acting sense the inspiring value of progressive social ideals and slogans.

The poor, the propertyless, in our society know from their experience the antagonism arising between those that "have" and those that "have not." But they do not understand from where this antagonism flows. They do not distinguish the economic conditions that account for this antagonism. People speak of the "exploitation" of the worker. They apply the term to the avowed capitalist countries. Most people also locate this "exploitation" in the midst of the government owned or regulated industries of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, though the publicity experts employed by these States declare to the world that in these countries capitalist exploitation has been banished or is fast disappearing. There are people who even find "exploitation" in the government owned industries of Soviet Russia, though the professional Soviet publicists assure us that exploitation persists in the U.S.S.R. only in so far as there remain small independent employers and kulaks but that with the advance of nationalization (government ownership, usually referred to as socialization in Soviet literature) the phenomenon of exploitation of labor is disappearing, and at a very rapid rate too. The wage-workers in the avowed capitalist countries as well as in the countries where their rulers say capitalism is being or has been abolished tend to believe the rationalizations of their masters in spite of the argument of their daily experience as wage-slaves. It is not easy to understand capitalism.

The chattel slave of antiquity knew that he was a slave. He knew who was his master. He could see that his surplus labor was taken by his master. His exploitation was obvious. So was the exploitation of the medieval peasant serf, who understood that all his work over and above what he and his family needed to survive to work again went to his lord in the form of feudal services and imposts. But in the existing society—in the avowed capitalist country, in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia—it is hard for the worker to recognize who is his master. In capitalism, the phenomenon of exploitation of man by man is veiled.

Consider the worker in the avowedly capitalist United States. It is true he has no property and must get a job to live. He knows that full well. But he also knows that he is a free person, that he has the same legal rights as the man who employs him

or the investors in the company that employ him. Sometimes he even compares himself to the high-salaried director of his factory or to the president of the Republic and says: "They too sell their services and get wages."

Consider the worker in the government owned United States Post Office. He knows that he has no property and must keep his job to live. He knows that he must sweat at the pleasure of his salaried superiors. But he also believes that it is the people of the United States who own the Post Office and he therefore does not work for any capitalist but for the United States government, for the people of the United States.

Consider the worker in the Turkish government owned rug factory. He knows that he must work hard to earn enough to buy food, clothing and shelter. The things he consumes to be enabled to live and work again are more and more the products of modern industry, and for some reason, he finds, he needs to work faster in order to buy all those modern—progressive—articles. Yet he understands that he is employed by the Turkish government, the representative of the Turkish people, and not by any foreign capitalists. He knows that the government of his country has become an industrial entrepreneur in order to speed the regeneration of Turkey. He knows that he works harder than before in order to do his bit to modernize his fatherland, to make it stronger and thus guarantee its independence against other powers.

Consider the worker in the government owned or government regulated industries of Italy and Germany. It may be true that he is getting less for his services (labor-power) in the shape of food, clothing and shelter. But isn't this sacrifice a loan that he the German or Italian worker makes to the "nation as a whole?" Similarly his employer is heavily taxed by the State, thus sharing a great part of his profit with the National Community.

The economic and political well-being of the entire nation—the German and Italian worker is told—must prevail over and give direction to the welfare of the individual. Indeed the workers have lost the right to strike and to bargain collectively through the instrumentality of the old-fashioned, "free" trade-unions, which taking a narrow sectional viewpoint had no regard for the well-being of the "nation as a whole." But why strike when the national government undertakes to settle employer-employee disputes and metes out economic and social justice through its labor trustees and labor courts? Have not also the employers lost the old bourgeois economic liberty they used to have under liberal capitalism? They can no longer do what they want with their enterprises. They have become junior partners, so to speak, sharing responsibilities with the State, the representative of the "nation as a whole," and, yes, with the workers.

Indeed most of industry and trade still remain nominally in private hands. But that is because the "nation as a whole," represented by the Nazi or Fascist State, finds this arrangement especially efficient and productive of the best results. Thus the stimulus of private initiative is not deadened and the interests of the entire nation are adequately satisfied and protected. And did not Hitler refer to the government owned German railways as the finest example of socialism in the world—German socialism, he calls it. And does not Mussolini state that the great industries working directly or indirectly for national defence and all large key industries "offering problems of a social as well as of an economic nature" will be taken over by the government as soon as it is evident that the needs of the "nation as a whole" cannot be fully satisfied through the present partnership of private entrepreneur and State.

The bolder worker in Germany and Italy may point to the numerous Nazi and Fascist State officials, party functionaries, theorists, propagandists, their parasitic hangers-on, who live on the fat of the land while the rest of the population is asked to make the required sacrifices for the good of the "nation as a whole." But only avowed enemies of the National Socialist Fatherland or of the Fascist National Community—solemnly declare the State publicists—would represent those idealists as members of a new or old ruling class. They are the inspired instruments of national regeneration. They must avail themselves of certain conveniences in order to render their national activity more efficient.

Let us consider next the Soviet worker—say, a coal miner. He, or she, receives a certain wage, one of the ten categories in force, varying between 3 rubles 80 kopeks a day to 12 rubles a day. He, or she, receives as great or small a part of the given wage as he actually produces. For the 5 or 7 or 10 or 12 rubles a day, the man or woman Soviet miner must buy, in order to continue functioning as a Soviet miner, men's shoes selling at 290 rubles, women's shoes at 280 rubles, a man's overcoat at 350 to 500 rubles, women's simple dresses that cost 294 rubles, bread at 1 ruble 20 a kilo, potatoes at 40 kopeks a kilo, meat, according to quality, at 6 to 9 rubles a kilo, butter selling at 16 rubles a kilo, lard at 18 rubles a kilo.

The Soviet miner knows that his rate of work has surpassed by a lot the rate common in the Russian mines in 1913. He knows that with technical progress his speed of work, and his productivity, increases. Some Soviet miners may even suspect that in comparison with the increased product of their labor, the part of it going to them as wages (considering how much the wages can buy) decreases.

At the same time the Soviet miner sees around him people who are obviously favored by the situation, that is, by the modernization, the industrialization of the proletarian fatherland. These people live much better than he and his kind. They are the "responsible-specialists" (factory, mill and mine directors, heads of large industrial and distributory establishments, commercial experts employed abroad and at home). They are the responsible State officials, high army officers, heads of newspapers, heads of trade unions, Party officials, their hangers-on, besides the important artists and writers employed by the State, the various State propagandists and the multifarious big and small "engineers of the soul" that the Soviet Union abounds in.

The thoughtful Soviet miner will notice a number of things about these favored fellow-proletarians of his. He will notice that the "responsible-specialists" nearest to him are first interested in results. They are first interested in keeping the wheels of industry turning faster and faster. What happens to the workers under the wheels of industry seems important to the spry, wide-awake "responsible-specialists" only in so far as it affects production, that is, the successful functioning of the system of wheels. (Most of them are quite young and owe no allegiance to the romantic folderol of the old Revolution.) They are first interested in results, in "production," because they, are first interested in their careers. There is mounting competition from other young ambitious Soviet executives, and executives' careers have something to do with material emoluments.

Now the intelligent Soviet worker may compare himself to the "responsible-specialists" and to the party officials, State artists and writers and other important "workers" that are doing so well in their common proletarian fatherland. He may notice that all these good comrades extract a certain intellectual and moral satisfaction from their work and at the same time enjoy a much higher standard of living than his own. They do not

go to the barrack-like "houses of rest" for their vacations. They live in different lodgings, wear different clothing, eat different food. He may also notice that the lucky new "responsible" comrades tend to be the offspring of comrades already well-placed economically in the country's social scheme. This, he guesses, is probably due to the incontrovertible fact that the higher material standard of these better-placed comrades favors their children in the competition for the advantageous positions. Somehow or other, the children of miner families, where father and mother work hard and barely earn enough to keep the large brood and themselves alive, are not apt for the necessary study, do not find the right connections and usually do not even evince the ambition to become highly paid "workers" in the Soviet fatherland.

If he is keen-witted and dares to entertain opinions contrary to those that the 10,000 State newspapers assure him every good (and class-conscious!) worker must think, he may say to himself: "It is true that when we first began building our new society, preference for these morally satisfying and materially advantageous positions were given to scions of the working class and the poor peasantry. But the latter are no less "bosses" because they were workers or poor peasants at the time of the Revolution."

This wayward Soviet worker may harbor a certain antagonism against the set-up and offer silent resistance to the speed-up and try one way or another, in the shrewd manner of human beings who realize they are otherwise helpless, to get the comrades in charge of the general economic machine to give him more with which to buy food, shelter and clothing. But on the other hand, in his socially responsible moments, say on the First of May or the Seventh of November, he says to himself that it is wrong even to think of striking in the Proletarian Fatherland. Strike against whom? Against the factory "triangle," against the directorate of his Trust, against the high officials of the Soviet State? That means striking against one's fellow workers. For what are they if not workers? There is no longer any private ownership of the means of production in the U.S.S.R. It is all the property of the State. Therefore the mentioned responsible comrades are workers who like him are paid for their services rendered to the national community? The fact that their recompense is fabulously greater, the fact that their manner of living is different is explained by the other fact that both he, the Soviet worker, and the directors of his Trust are in the first phase of communism, where the rule is—according to Marx and Lenin—to each according to his performance, or still better, as the New Constitution puts it, to each according to the quality and quantity of his performance, that is, according to his kind of work.

We say that in capitalism exploitation is veiled because the worker possesses the same juridical rights as the capitalist, because he appears to be a free seller of his labor, for which he receives wages, though it is his labor-power that he really sells.

The average worker in the avowed capitalist country knows that he has the same legal rights as any other citizen, whether the latter is a millionaire or a Bowery scavenger. He knows that he is free to buy and sell his personal services (labor-power) like any other citizen. The fact that he always sells and never buys such personal services, the average worker in capitalism notices but does not quite understand. He must, however, perceive in time that behind the relation of free buyers and sellers of labor-power hides an exploitation relation parallel to that which existed between the chattel slave and master of antiquity and the serf and lord of feudalism.

This understanding should be found much more difficult by the worker employed in a State owned enterprise of the same

capitalist country. For the tendency on his part is to believe that the State employing him is the representative of all the citizens of the country, and that he is therefore an employee of a commonwealth and could not possibly be exploited by any god-damn parasite of a capitalist spending the best part of his life on yachts and in limousines.

And this understanding should be very difficult to attain by young German or Italian workers, one of the generation that has been trained by the new régime. For their heads have been filled with the notion that Fascism and Nazism are doing away with classes and are replacing them with the interests and outlook of the national or folk community. If they get less to eat and work harder, it is all for the greater glory of the nation. It will be very difficult for the earnest and foolish German or Italian worker of the generation moulded by the Nazi or Fascist mind-forming machines to see his position in capitalist society.

But how more difficult is understanding for the Soviet worker. He sweats on the job in a country where the 19th century category of capitalists as individuals possessing juridical titles of ownership to industrial and commercial enterprises, does not seem to apply, for the State owns all the means of production. Here the worker's boss may have been yesterday a son of workers or, more likely, a revolutionary intellectual who spoke eloquently in the name of the "crucified proletariat." Here no one person may be recognized as the "owner of the works." For no one person lives exclusively or mostly off the interest on the government bonds. And all those lucky directors, heads of enterprises, all the happy officials, writers, actors and artists merely receive salaries, "due to them because they fill responsible posts in the developing Socialist economy." The fact that a salary is large—we are told—does not make it any less a "salary." Does not the American worker know that the President of the United States receives a "salary?"

It is not enough to repeat with Engels: "The more it (the State) proceeds to the taking over of the productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with." For should the Soviet worker ponder on this passage from the writings of one of the patron saints of the State that keeps his nose to the grindstone with the help of three passports and the threat of firing him out of a job and domicile to go eat grass in the wilderness, he would be told by the experts whose job it is to "fix" his mind that the Soviet State is not the "modern State" Engels refers to, but is the State of the Proletarian Dictatorship, that is, the proletariat organized as a State. It is evident that Engels spoke of total State ownership in an industrially developed country when he wrote that with total State ownership the capitalist relation is not done away with but "is rather brought to a head" and "then topples over." We have here total State ownership in a country that is relatively undeveloped; where the State ownership helped to cope with a cataclysmic condition, the collapse of the economic process, that was the outgrowth of the backwardness of this country within Europe of the 20th century; where State ownership still stands for industrial progress, though now that the cataclysmic conditions it helped to correct are past, there are already signs that this State ownership stands in the way of further industrial development of the country.

The intelligent Soviet worker, considering the problem in the privacy of his mind, cannot repeat with Trotsky: "The question of the social character of the U.S.S.R. has not yet been decided by history." We should have here the only country in history that is devoid of a social character. It is evident that Trotsky's

cleverness has here outraced his judgement. To decide the social character of this or that State or country—that precisely is the first concern of the socialist. The intelligent Soviet worker sees that the population of his country divides itself in two sections. One section dresses well, eats well, has comfortable lodgings and feels the joy of life that is the reward of those that are in the position to administer other men as well as things. The comrades in the second section work hard, eat poor food, inhabit uncomfortable lodgings, traveled third and fourth class, take meager vacations in barrack-like “rest houses,” pay for their “social services” with huge subtractions made by the management out of the pay-envelopes, reproduce large broods of children to work and live like themselves. All of this is happening in an atmosphere of juridical equality that is more pronounced than the deceptive equality of the exploiters and the exploited in the avowed capitalist country especially because here this equality de jure is dressed in revolutionary language and the exploitation relation seems entirely hidden by the total State ownership. But the latter can only remain hidden to the Trotskys, gentlemen who, earnest though they are in certain matters, feel a sense of responsibility for the false façade they had helped to erect. The intelligent Soviet worker, as well as the socialist elsewhere, will notice that this State ownership, which Trotsky says is devoid for the time being of any social character, is enjoyed by a minority. The great majority of the Soviet population tend it, feed it with their life blood, fear it. A huge uniformed and secret police force, the same old military-bureaucratic apparatus of repression that we found in all societies featured by the phenomenon of exploitation of man by man, guards the economic machine from the hunger and need of the great number and for the enjoyment of the privileged minority.

The country is developing industrially, but the difference between the two sections of the Soviet population is growing wider, at an accelerated rate.

Trotsky, Varga, Webb and all the big and little professional heirs to Marx may prove that according to the good book, there is no capitalism in the Soviet Union. “An attempt has been made to camouflage the Soviet enigma with the help of the term State Capitalism, which presents the advantage of offering nobody any precise meaning . . . There has never been a régime of this kind and there will never be any. (pp. 277-278, *Révolution Trahie*). There is no need of referring again to Engels, who deals precisely with this idea in his *Anti-Duehring*. (“But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into State-ownership does not do away with the capitalist nature of the productive forces.”) And there is no need of going to Lenin, who copying faithfully what Engels said about over-ripe capitalism, and falsely applying the same concept to backward Russia, wrote in his pamphlet *Food Tax*, in 1921: “State capitalism would be a forward step in relation to the present situation

in our Soviet republic . . . I imagine with what noble indignation the “left communist” will react to these words. I can imagine the “deadly criticism” to which he will submit before the workers this “deviation of a right-wing Bolshevik.” What? The passage to State capitalism would be a step forward in a socialist soviet republic? For Trotsky there “has never been such a régime—as State capitalism—and there will never be.” Indeed, because for him capitalism is the private ownership of the means of production, as we knew it especially in the 19th century, while “socialist industry is a trust of trusts” (*Toward Socialism or Capitalism*, Methuen & Co., London, page 117), that is, exactly the development which Engels points out in the passage above, “does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces,” which “does not do away with the capitalist relation,” because, “the modern State, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the State of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital.”

The Soviet publicists and the foreign literary hirelings of the Soviet State prove in daily essays that it is within the framework of socialism that the sweated Soviet worker undergoes his sweating. Trotsky proves—begging the question with the trick “there has never been a régime of this kind and there will never be any,” and by means of his typically flippant use of the terms “absurd” and “nonsense”—that the Soviet worker is undergoing his suffering in a sort of purgatory, located midway between the hell of capitalism and the paradise of socialism. And which way the sinner goes will depend on the angels of light and darkness engaged in epochal contest while this is being written. It will depend on whether had archangel Stalin or the radiant archangel Trotsky wins the day.

But the fact is that these fine people are arguing as they are and resorting to Marx in a pinch because they must reinterpret favorably an egregious form of capitalism in order to suit their interests as politicians (Trotsky) or as servants of the Soviet eaters of surplus value. In the Soviet Union as in the avowed capitalist countries the exploitation is hidden by various social forms. It is precisely Marx's analysis of what is capitalism, that is, the totality of the social relations of production constituting capitalism, which helps us to understand what the worker sweated within the Soviet “experiment” feels to be true.

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